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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TOKYO 002221

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/23/2016
TAGS: [EWWT](#) [PBTS](#) [PHSA](#) [PREL](#) [JA](#) [KS](#)
SUBJECT: PATCHED UP HULL: JAPAN-ROK AGREEMENT ENDS MARITIME
SURVEY DISPUTE

REF: A. TOKYO 02098
[1](#)B. TOKYO 02154
[1](#)C. TOKYO 02159
[1](#)D. SEOUL 1271
[1](#)E. SEOUL 01314

Classified By: CHARGE D'AFFAIRES JOSEPH R. DONOVAN. REASONS 1.4 (b),(d)
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[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: On April 24, MOFA Asian and Oceanian Affairs DDG Sadoshima briefed Political Minister Counselor Meserve on the outcome of negotiations with the ROK to end the dispute that erupted over Japan's plan to conduct a bathymetric survey of a zone that lies between their contested EEZs. DDG Sadoshima stated that Japan and the ROK had agreed on three points:

- 1) Japan will cease plans to survey the disputed area.
- 2) The ROK will postpone plans to submit a Korean naming proposal to the international Subcommittee on Undersea Feature Names (SCUFN).
- 3) Both countries will resume bilateral talks on the issue as early as possible.

-- Sadoshima characterized this as a diplomatic success, but agreed it was only a temporary solution, "not a significant understanding."

-- Meserve commended the Foreign Ministry on its role in averting a crisis, but stressed that their agreement is only a patch on the problem, and that it remains very important for Japan and the ROK to work out a lasting solution.

END SUMMARY

[1](#)2. (C) On April 24, 2006, MOFA Asian and Oceanian Affairs Bureau Deputy Director General Sadoshima briefed Political Minister Counselor Michael Meserve on the outcome of negotiations that took place in Seoul April 21-22 between Japanese Vice Foreign Minister Yachi and ROK VFM Yu Myung Hwan over the maritime survey dispute. Sadoshima said that a diplomatic solution was achieved "in the nick of time," but indicated the result was only a temporary solution, "not a significant understanding."

13. (C) Sadoshima reported that Japan and the ROK had agreed on three points:

-- Japan will cancel its plan to survey the zone between the disputed EEZs.

-- The ROK will postpone submitting a Korean naming proposal to the Subcommittee on Undersea Feature Names (SCUFN), meeting in Bremerhaven, Germany in June.

-- Both will resume talks to resolve the dispute as early as possible.

Those talks may start as soon as May, and will be held at the director general level, Sadoshima further explained.

14. (C) South Korea had only been willing to state that it would submit its naming proposal "at an appropriate time," Sadoshima said, but Japan understood that to mean the ROK would not go forward with its naming proposal at the SCUFN meeting. That understanding is based on the fact that while the ROK side would not put anything in writing for public release, the two sides did exchange memoranda for comment and the ROK negotiators raised no objection to Japan's interpretation of the point that no name changes will be submitted at the meeting in Bremerhaven, Sadoshima explained.

15. (C) Sadoshima related that he had been in his office all day on Saturday April 22 while the negotiations were taking place. During the day he received several "May Day" phone calls from Japan's negotiators describing the situation as very tense, Sadoshima revealed.

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16. (C) Commending Sadoshima and his Foreign Ministry colleagues on their role in averting a crisis, Political Minister Counselor Meserve pointed out that they have put a patch on the problem, but stressed it is important both countries work together to achieve a more lasting solution during their upcoming talks. Sadoshima agreed, stating that the solution that had been reached over the weekend only dealt with "the clear and present danger." The issue is still out there, so we will continue our efforts to avoid these kind of antics in the future, Sadoshima assured. He cautioned, however, that prospects for achieving a more comprehensive solution were "not very bright" because the positions of the two governments were "180 degrees apart." Even so, useful suggestions will no doubt be proposed to avoid another crisis in the future, Sadoshima pointed out.

17. (C) Asked about the reaction in the Diet, Sadoshima replied that so far he was aware of only one LDP member asking "some questions that were not very tough," but added that his boss, Director General Sasae, was at that moment still meeting with other key LDP members in order to brief them fully on the outcome of the talks.

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